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(71) Applicant: THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE LE-
LAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY [US/US];
900 Welch Road, Suite 350, Palo Alto, CA 94304 (US).

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(72) Inventors: KHOSLA, Chaitan: 211 Belgrave Avenue,
San Francisco, CA 94117 (US). PFEIFER, Blaine: 1450
Oak Creek Drive, #402, Palo Alto, CA 94304 (US).

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(74) Agents: MURASHIGE, Kate, H. et al.; Morrison & Foerster LLP, 3811 Valley Centre Drive, Suite 500, San Diego, CA 92130-2332 (US).

WO 01/27306 A3

(54) Title: BIOSYNTHESIS OF POLYKETIDE SYNTHASE SUBSTRATES

(57) Abstract: The use of enzymes which catalyze the production of starter and extender units for polyketides is described. These enzymes may be used to enhance the yield of polyketides that are natively produced or polyketides that are rationally designed. By using these techniques, the synthesis of a complete polyketide has been achieved in *E. coli*. This achievement permits a host organism with desirable characteristics to be used in the production of such polyketides and to assess the results of gene shuffling.

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 7 C12P11/00 C12P19/62 C12N1/21 // (C12N1/21,
 C12R1:19), (C12P11/00, C12R1:19), (C12P19/62, C12R1:19)

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 C12P C12N

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ, BIOSIS, MEDLINE, EMBASE

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	<p>STASSI D L ET AL.: "Ethyl-substituted erythromycin derivatives produced by directed metabolic engineering" PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF USA, vol. 95, no. 13, 23 June 1998 (1998-06-23), pages 7305-7309, XP002131683 ISSN: 0027-8424 abstract page 7308, left-hand column, line 4 -right-hand column, line 17 --- -/-</p>	1,4,9, 10,13, 24,30,33

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- *A* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

T later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

X document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

Y document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

& document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

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 European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
 NL-2280 HV Rijswijk
 Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
 Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

van de Kamp, M

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International Application No

PCT/US 00/28573

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	<p>TANG L ET AL.: "Amino acid catabolism and antibiotic synthesis: valine is a source of precursors for macrolide biosynthesis in <i>Streptomyces ambofaciens</i> and <i>Streptomyces fradiae</i>" <i>JOURNAL OF BACTERIOLOGY</i>, vol. 176, no. 19, October 1994 (1994-10), pages 6107-6119, XP001009878 abstract page 6107, left-hand column, line 1 -right-hand column, line 24 page 6116, left-hand column, line 18-65 ---</p>	1,2,4,9, 10,13, 24,30
X	WO 98 27203 A (KOSAN BIOSCIENCES) 25 June 1998 (1998-06-25)	42
A	page 2, line 29 -page 4, line 28 examples 1-12 claims 1-39 ---	1-10,12, 13, 24-30,43
X	<p>KAO C M ET AL.: "Engineered biosynthesis of a complete macrolactone in a heterologous host" <i>SCIENCE</i>, vol. 265, no. 5171, 22 July 1994 (1994-07-22), pages 509-512, XP002073974 ISSN: 0036-8075 abstract</p>	33-35
A	page 510, left-hand column, line 65 -right-hand column, line 8 ---	1,2,4,6, 9,14,15, 24-26
A	<p>HSIEH Y-J ET AL.: "Inhibition of erythromycin synthesis by disruption of malonyl-coenzyme A decarboxylase gene eryM in <i>Saccharopolyspora erythraea</i>" <i>JOURNAL OF BACTERIOLOGY</i>, vol. 176, no. 3, February 1994 (1994-02), pages 714-724, XP001009880 ISSN: 0021-9193 page 722, left-hand column, line 43-51 ---</p>	1,10,13, 24,30
A	<p>KHOSLA C ET AL.: "Tolerance and specificity of polyketide synthases" <i>ANNUAL REVIEW OF BIOCHEMISTRY</i>, vol. 68, 1999, pages 219-253, XP000884453 page 222, line 35-37 page 222, line 5-8 ---</p>	1,10,13, 24,30
	-/-	

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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PCT/US 00/28573

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	QUADRI L E ET AL.: "Characterization of Sfp, a <i>Bacillus subtilis</i> phosphopantetheinyl transferase for peptidyl carrier protein domains in peptide synthetases" BIOCHEMISTRY, vol. 37, no. 6, 10 February 1998 (1998-02-10), pages 1585-1595, XP002170303 abstract ---	8,12
A	UMEYAMA T ET AL.: "Expression of the <i>Streptomyces coelicolor</i> A3(2) <i>ptpA</i> gene encoding a phosphotyrosine protein phosphatase leads to overproduction of secondary metabolites in <i>S. lividans</i> " FEMS MICROBIOLOGY LETTERS, vol. 144, no. 2-3, 1 November 1996 (1996-11-01), pages 177-184, XP001009805 abstract ---	1,2,4, 10,13, 24,25,30
A	DONADIO S ET AL: "Erythromycin production in <i>Saccharopolyspora erythraea</i> does not require a functional propionyl-CoA carboxylase." MOLECULAR MICROBIOLOGY, vol. 19, no. 5, 1996, pages 977-984, XP001009721 ISSN: 0950-382X abstract page 982, right-hand column, line 27-47 ---	12,14, 15,34,35
A	ZIERMANN R ET AL.: "Recombinant polyketide synthesis in <i>Streptomyces</i> : engineering of improved host strains" BIOTECHNIQUES, vol. 26, no. 1, January 1999 (1999-01), pages 106-110, XP002170304 abstract ---	1,2,4,6, 7,9, 24-26
A	WO 95 08548 A (JOHN INNES CENTRE ;UNIV LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR (US)) 30 March 1995 (1995-03-30) page 4, line 26 -page 7, line 12 page 21, line 32 -page 31, line 15 examples 1-3 claims 1-30 ---	1,2,4,7, 24-26 -/-

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	WO 99 19518 A (DIVERSA INC ;SHORT JAY M (US)) 22 April 1999 (1999-04-22) page 4, line 12 -page 6, line 19 page 11, line 22 -page 12, line 25 page 24, line 1-6 page 25, line 7-20 ---	1-5,7,8, 10,11, 13, 24-28, 30,33, 40,42
A	WO 99 03986 A (KOSAN BIOSCIENCES INC) 28 January 1999 (1999-01-28) page 2, line 7 -page 3, line 15 page 4, line 7-28 examples 1-3 ---	24, 30-33, 40,41
P,X	WO 00 20601 A (KOSAN BIOSCIENCES INC ;CHU DANIEL (US); KHOSLA CHAITAN (US); SANTI) 13 April 2000 (2000-04-13) page 6, line 29 -page 7, line 11 page 67, line 30 -page 70, line 2 claim 17 ---	1,2,10, 13, 24-26, 30,33
P,X	ZHANG W ET AL.: "Molecular analysis and heterologous expression of the gene encoding methylmalonyl-coenzyme A mutase from rifamycin SV-producing strain Amycolatopsis mediterranei U32" APPLIED BIOCHEMISTRY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY, vol. 82, no. 3, December 1999 (1999-12), pages 209-225, XP001009874 abstract page 222, line 12 -page 223, line 2; figure 6; table 1 ---	1,2,4, 10,13, 24,25,30
P,A	RODRIGUEZ E ET AL.: "Genetic and biochemical characterization of the alpha and beta components of a propionyl-CoA carboxylase complex of Streptomyces coelicolor A3(2)." MICROBIOLOGY (READING), vol. 145, no. 11, November 1999 (1999-11), pages 3109-3119, XP001009722 ISSN: 1350-0872 cited in the application abstract --- -/-	12,14, 15,34,35

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
T	<p>PFEIFER B A ET AL.: "Biosynthesis of complex polyketides in a metabolically engineered strain of <i>E. coli</i>" <i>SCIENCE</i>, vol. 291, no. 5509, 2 March 2001 (2001-03-02), pages 1790-1792, XP002170306 the whole document</p> <p>---</p>	1-10, 13-15, 24-30, 33-35, 42,43
T	<p>PFEIFER B A ET AL.: "Biosynthesis of polyketides in heterologous hosts" <i>MICROBIOLOGY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY REVIEWS</i>, vol. 65, no. 1, March 2001 (2001-03), pages 106-118, XP000997626 the whole document</p> <p>page 108, left-hand column, line 13 -page 111, left-hand column, line 8 page 113, left-hand column, line 3 -page 116, left-hand column, line 8</p> <p>-----</p>	

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US 00/28573

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.: because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claims Nos.: because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:

3. Claims Nos.: because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.

2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.

3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

1-13, 24-33, 40-43 (all partially); 14, 15, 34, 35 (all compl.)

Remark on Protest

The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.

No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. Claims: 1-13,24-33,40-43 (all partially); 14,15,34, 35 (all completely)

Prokaryotic host cells (e.g., of the genus *Escherichia* (e.g., *E. coli*), *Streptomyces*, *Bacillus*, *Pseudomonas* or *Flavobacterium*) which are genetically modified for enhanced synthesis of at least one (complete) polyketide (e.g., 6-dEB), wherein said modification comprises incorporation of an expression system for producing a functional propionyl-CoA carboxylase that catalyzes the production of starter and/or extender units.

Said host cells which do not produce polyketide in the absence of genetic modification, and wherein said modification comprises incorporation of an expression system for a polyketide synthase (PKS) and incorporation of an expression system for a phosphopantetheinyl transferase. A method to produce a polyketide comprising culturing said cells.

A method to assess the results of a procedure effecting modification of PKS genes using said *E. coli* cells which contain a functional propionyl-CoA carboxylase and possibly further a functional phosphopantetheinyl transferase.

A method to enhance the production of a polyketide in said microbial host cells which method comprises the provision of said host cell with an expression system for propionyl-CoA carboxylase, e.g., encoded by the pccB and accA2 genes from *S. coelicolor*.

Recombinant microbial cells (e.g., *Streptomyces* (*coelicolor* CH999) or *Escherichia* (*coli*)) that produce a (complete) polyketide (e.g., 6-dEB) which have been modified to contain an expression system for (a) nucleotide sequence(s) encoding said propionyl-CoA carboxylase, and methods for producing a polyketide using said cells.

A reaction mixture for the production of a polyketide comprising in addition to enzymes catalyzing the production of said polyketide, said functional propionyl-CoA carboxylase, e.g., encoded by the pccB and accA2 genes from *S. coelicolor*, and methods for producing a polyketide using said reaction mixture.

2. Claims: 1-12,42,43 (all partially)

Prokaryotic host cells (e.g., of the genus *Escherichia* (e.g., *E. coli*), *Streptomyces*, *Bacillus*, *Pseudomonas* or *Flavobacterium*) which are genetically modified for enhanced synthesis of at least one (complete) polyketide (e.g., 6-dEB), wherein said modification comprises deleting a pathway responsible for propionate catabolism, e.g., the prpA-D operon of *E. coli*.

Said host cells which do not produce polyketide in the

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

absence of genetic modification, and wherein said modification comprises incorporation of an expression system for a polyketide synthase (PKS) and incorporation of an expression system for a phosphopantetheinyl transferase. A method to produce a polyketide comprising culturing said cells.

A method to assess the results of a procedure effecting modification of PKS genes using said *E. coli* cells which contain a functional phosphopantetheinyl transferase and which have been further modified to delete said *prpA-D* operon.

3. Claims: 1-11,13,24-33,40-43 (all partially); 16,17,36, 37 (all completely)

Prokaryotic host cells (e.g., of the genus *Escherichia* (e.g., *E. coli*), *Streptomyces*, *Bacillus*, *Pseudomonas* or *Flavobacterium*) which are genetically modified for enhanced synthesis of at least one (complete) polyketide (e.g., 6-dEB), wherein said modification comprises incorporation of an expression system for producing a malonyl-CoA decarboxylase that catalyzes the production of starter and/or extender units.

Said host cells which do not produce polyketide in the absence of genetic modification, and wherein said modification comprises incorporation of an expression system for a polyketide synthase (PKS) and incorporation of an expression system for a phosphopantetheinyl transferase.

A method to produce a polyketide comprising culturing said cells.

A method to assess the results of a procedure effecting modification of PKS genes using said *E. coli* cells.

A method to enhance the production of a polyketide in said microbial host cells which method comprises the provision of said host cell with an expression system for malonyl-CoA decarboxylase, e.g., encoded by the *matA* gene of *R. trifolii*. Recombinant microbial cells (e.g., *Streptomyces* (*coelicolor* CH999) or *Escherichia* (*coli*)) that produce a (complete) polyketide (e.g., 6-dEB) which have been modified to contain an expression system for (a) nucleotide sequence(s) encoding said malonyl-CoA decarboxylase, and methods for producing a polyketide using said cells.

A reaction mixture for the production of a polyketide comprising in addition to enzymes catalyzing the production of said polyketide, said malonyl-CoA decarboxylase, e.g., encoded by the *matA* gene from *R. trifolii*, and methods for producing a polyketide using said reaction mixture.

4. Claims: 1-11,13,24-33,40-43 (all partially); 18-23,38, 39 (all completely)

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

Prokaryotic host cells (e.g., of the genus *Escherichia* (e.g., *E. coli*), *Streptomyces*, *Bacillus*, *Pseudomonas* or *Flavobacterium*) which are genetically modified for enhanced synthesis of at least one (complete) polyketide (e.g., 6-dEB), wherein said modification comprises incorporation of an expression system for producing a malonyl-CoA synthetase that catalyzes the production of starter and/or extender units.

Said host cells which do not produce polyketide in the absence of genetic modification, and wherein said modification comprises incorporation of an expression system for a polyketide synthase (PKS) and incorporation of an expression system for a phosphopantetheinyl transferase. A method to produce a polyketide comprising culturing said cells.

A method to assess the results of a procedure effecting modification of PKS genes using said *E. coli* cells.

A method to enhance the production of a polyketide in said microbial host cells which method comprises the provision of said host cell with an expression system for malonyl-CoA synthetase, e.g., encoded by the *matB* gene of *R. trifolii*, and which possibly further includes providing the substrate (of formula $R_2C(COOH)_2$, with R according to claims 22 and 23) for malonyl-CoA synthetase and an expression system for a second enzyme that effects entry of said substrate into the cell, e.g., the malonate transporter encoded by the *matC* gene of *R. trifolii*.

Recombinant microbial cells (e.g., *Streptomyces (coelicolor* CH999) or *Escherichia (coli)*) that produce a (complete) polyketide (e.g., 6-dEB) which have been modified to contain an expression system for (a) nucleotide sequence(s) encoding said propionyl-CoA carboxylase, and methods for producing a polyketide using said cells.

A reaction mixture for the production of a polyketide comprising in addition to enzymes catalyzing the production of said polyketide, a first enzyme which catalyzes the conversion of a substrate to an extender or starter unit for said polyketide (malonyl-CoA synthetase), and possibly further a substrate therefor (of formula $R_2C(COOH)_2$, with R according to claim 39), and methods for producing a polyketide using said reaction mixture.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Internat ional Application No

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Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
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(74) Agents: MURASHIGE, Kate, H. et al.; Morrison & Foerster LLP, 12636 High Bluff Drive, Suite 300, San Diego, CA 92130-2071 (US).

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60/232,379 14 September 2000 (14.09.2000) US

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(71) Applicant: THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE LE-
LAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY [US/US];
900 Welch Road, Suite 350, Palo Alto, CA 94304 (US).

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WO 01/27306 A2

(54) Title: BIOSYNTHESIS OF POLYKETIDE SYNTHASE SUBSTRATES

(57) Abstract: The use of enzymes which catalyze the production of starter and extender units for polyketides is described. These enzymes may be used to enhance the yield of polyketides that are natively produced or polyketides that are rationally designed. By using these techniques, the synthesis of a complete polyketide has been achieved in *E. coli*. This achievement permits a host organism with desirable characteristics to be used in the production of such polyketides and to assess the results of gene shuffling.

BIOSYNTHESIS OF POLYKETIDE SYNTHASE SUBSTRATES

Statement of Rights to Inventions Made Under Federally Sponsored Research

5 This invention was made with U.S. government support from the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. The U.S. government may have certain rights in this invention.

Technical Field

10 The invention relates to methods to adapt prokaryotic hosts for efficient production of polyketides. In one aspect, the hosts are modified to synthesize the starter and/or extender units used by polyketide synthases in the synthesis of polyketides. Other host modifications may also be made. Thus, the invention includes methods for production of complex polyketides in such diverse organisms as *Escherichia coli*, *Bacillus*, *Myxococcus*, and *Streptomyces*.

Background Art

15 Complex polyketides such as 6-deoxyerythronolide B (6-dEB), the macrocyclic core of the antibiotic erythromycin, constitute an important class of natural products. They are synthesized by "modular" polyketide synthases, generally found in actinomycetes. For example, the polyketide synthase (PKS) which results in the synthesis of 6-dEB is produced in *Sacromyces erythraea*. The polyketides produced in these native hosts are generally subsequently tailored to obtain the finished antibiotic by glycosylation, oxidation, hydroxylation and other modifying reactions. Recent work from this laboratory has demonstrated that it is possible to express polyketide synthase modules in a functional form in *Escherichia coli* (Gokhale, R.S., *et al.*, *Science* (1999) 284:482-485). However, in order to harness 20 these modular enzymes for polyketide biosynthesis in *E. coli*, or in other hosts that do not normally produce them it is also necessary to produce their appropriate substrates *in vivo* in a controlled manner. For example, metabolites such as acetyl-CoA, propionyl-CoA, malonyl-CoA and methylmalonyl-CoA are the most common substrates of these enzymes. *E. coli* has the capability to produce acetyl-CoA, 25 propionyl-CoA, and malonyl-CoA; however, the latter two substrates are only present 30 in

in small quantities in the cell, and their biosynthesis is tightly controlled. The ability of *E. coli* to synthesize methylmalonyl-CoA has not been documented thus far.

Similar conditions prevail in other microbial cells, especially those that do not natively produce polyketides, such as various species of *Escherichia*, *Bacillus*,
5 *Pseudomonas*, and *Flavobacterium*. Thus, generally, the required starter and/or extender units may not be produced in adequate amounts in any particular host. Further, by appropriate selection of the acyl transferase (AT) domains of the PKS in question, substrates more complex than those just mentioned may be employed. As
10 an example, the PKS for synthesis of FK506 comprises an acyl transferase domain that incorporates substrates such as propyl malonyl-CoA in preference to malonyl-CoA or methylmalonyl-CoA. It would be helpful to have available a method which provides this range of substrates in appropriate levels in any arbitrarily chosen host organism.

Additional problems that may need to be surmounted in effecting the
15 production of polyketides in prokaryotic hosts, especially those which do not natively produce polyketides, include the presence of enzymes which catabolize the required starter and/or extender units, such as the enzymes encoded by the *prp* operon of *E. coli*, which are responsible for catabolism of exogenous propionate as a carbon and energy source in this organism. In order to optimize production of a polyketide which
20 utilizes propionyl CoA as a starter unit and/or utilizes its carboxylation product, methylmalonyl CoA as an extender unit, this operon should be disabled, except for that portion (the E locus) which encodes a propionyl CoA synthetase. Any additional loci which encode catabolizing enzymes for starter or extender units are also advantageously disabled.

25 In addition, a particular prokaryotic host, such as *E. coli*, may lack the phosphopantetheinyl transferase required for activation of the polyketide synthase. It may be required to modify the host to contain such a transferase as well.

30 In summary, it would be advantageous to effect the production of polyketides in microbial, especially prokaryotic hosts in general, and, in particular, in hosts which do not natively produce polyketides. These hosts often have advantages over native polyketide producers such as *Streptomyces* in terms of ease of transformation, ability to grow rapidly in culture, and the like. These advantages are particularly useful in assessing the results of random mutagenesis or gene shuffling of polyketide synthases.

Thus, the invention provides a multiplicity of approaches to adapt microbial hosts for the production of polyketides.

Disclosure of the Invention

The invention has achieved, for the first time, the production of a complete polyketide product, 6-dEB, in the ubiquitously useful host organism, *E. coli*. The methods used to achieve this result are adaptable to microbial hosts in general, especially procaryotics. They can be used to adapt microbial hosts which do not natively produce polyketides to such production and to enhance the production of polyketides in hosts that normally produce them. Depending on the host chosen, the 5 modifications required may include incorporation into the organism of expression systems for the polyketide synthase genes themselves; disabling of endogenous genes which encode catabolic enzymes for the starter and/or extender units; incorporation of expression systems for enzymes required for post translational modification of the synthases, such as phosphopantetheinyl transferase; and incorporation of enzymes 10 which enhance the levels of starter and/or extender units. The particular combination of modifications required to adapt the host will vary with the nature of the polyketide desired and with the nature of the host itself.

15

Thus, in one aspect, the invention is directed to microbial host cells which are genetically modified for enhanced synthesis of at least one polyketide wherein said 20 modification comprises incorporation of at least one expression system for producing a protein that catalyzes the production of starter and/or extender units and/or disabling at least one endogenous pathway for catabolism of starter and/or extender units.

Additional modifications may also be made, such as incorporating at least one 25 expression system for a polyketide synthase protein and, if necessary, incorporating at least one expression system for a phosphopantetheinyl transferase.

In other aspects, the invention is directed to methods of preparing polyketides, including complete polyketides, in the modified cells of the invention. A preferred embodiment is a method to synthesize 6-dEB or other complete polyketides in *E. coli*.

In still another aspect, the invention is directed to a method to assess the 30 results of gene shuffling or random mutagenesis of polyketide synthase genes by taking advantage of the high transformation efficiency of *E. coli*.

Modes of Carrying Out the Invention

In the illustrative example below, *E. coli* is modified to effect the production of 6-dEB, the polyketide precursor of erythromycin. The three proteins required for this synthesis, DEBS1, DEBS2 and DEBS3 are known and the genes encoding them have been cloned and sequenced. However, a multiplicity of additional PKS genes have been cloned and sequenced as well, including those encoding enzymes which produce the polyketide precursors of avermectin, oleandomycin, epothilone, megalomycin, picromycin, FK506, FK520, rapamycin, tylosin, spinosad, and many others. In addition, methods to modify native PKS genes so as to alter the nature of the polyketide produced have been described. Production of hybrid modular PKS proteins and synthesis systems is described and claimed in U.S. patent 5,962,290. Methods to modify PKS enzymes so as to permit efficient incorporation of diketides is described in U.S. patent 6,080,555. Methods to modify PKS enzymes by mixing and matching individual domains or groups of domains is described in U.S. Serial No. 09/073,538. Methods to alter the specificity of modules of modular PKS's to incorporate particular starter or extender units are described in U.S. Serial No. 09/346,860, now allowed. Improved methods to prepare diketides for incorporation into polyketides is described in U.S. Serial No. 09/492,733. Methods to mediate the synthesis of the polyketide chain between modules are described in U.S. Serial No. 09/500,747. The contents of the foregoing patents and patent applications are incorporated herein by reference.

Thus, a selected host may be modified to include any one of many possible polyketide synthases by incorporating therein appropriate expression systems for the proteins included in such synthases. Either complete synthases or partial synthases may be supplied depending on the product desired. If the host produces polyketide synthase natively, and a different polyketide from that ordinarily produced is desired, it may be desirable to delete the genes encoding the native PKS. Methods for such deletion are described in U.S. patent 5,830,750, which is incorporated herein by reference.

For hosts which do not natively produce polyketides, the enzymes that tailor polyketide synthases may be lacking or deficient, so that in addition to supplying the expression systems for the polyketide synthases themselves, it may be necessary to supply an expression system for these enzymes. One enzyme which is essential for

the activity of PKS is a phosphopantetheinyl transferase. The genes encoding these transferases have been cloned and are available. These are described in U.S. patent application 08/728,742, which is now published, for example, in Canadian application 2,232,230. The contents of these documents are incorporated herein by reference.

5

Depending on the host selected, such hosts may natively include genes which produce proteins that catabolize desired starter and/or extender units. One example includes the *prp* operon wherein the proteins encoded by subunits A-D catabolize exogenous propionate. The enzyme encoded by *prp E* is desirable however as it is a propionyl CoA synthetase. The portions of the operon encoding catabolizing enzymes are advantageously disabled in modifying *E. coli*. Similar operons in other hosts may be disabled as needed.

10

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In general, in all cases, enzymes that enhance the production of starter and/or extender units, and any enzymes required for activation of these production enzymes need to be incorporated in the cells by modifying them to contain expression systems for these proteins.

In one embodiment of this aspect, advantage is taken of the *matABC* operon, which was recently cloned from *Rhizobium trifoli* (An, J.H., et al., *Eur. J. Biochem.* (1988) 15:395-402). There are three proteins encoded by this operon.

20

MatA encodes a malonyl-CoA decarboxylase, which normally catalyzes the reaction: malonyl-CoA → acetyl-CoA +CO₂.

MatB encodes a malonyl-CoA synthetase which catalyzes the reaction: malonic acid +CoASH → malonyl-CoA (in an ATP dependent reaction).

25

MatC encodes a malonate transporter which is believed to be responsible for transport of malonic acid across the cell membrane.

30

These enzymes are demonstrated herein to be somewhat promiscuous with respect to substrate in their ability to catalyze the reactions shown. Thus, in addition to malonyl-CoA and malonic acids (for MatA and MatB respectively) as substrates, these enzymes can also utilize methylmalonyl-CoA and methylmalonic acid; ethylmalonyl-CoA and ethylmalonic acid; propylmalonyl-CoA and propylmalonic acid and the like. Thus, these enzymes can be used to provide a variety of starter and extender units for synthesis of desired polyketides.

In another embodiment of this aspect, homologs of *matB* and *matC* derived from *S. coelicolor* (GenBank accession No. AL163003) can be used.

Also useful in supplying substrates for extender units is the gene encoding propionyl CoA carboxylase. This carboxylase enzyme is a dimer encoded by the 5 *pccB* and *accA2* genes which have been characterized from *Streptomyces coelicolor* A3 by Rodriguez, E., et al., *Microbiology* (1999) 145:3109-3119. A biotin ligase is needed for activation of these proteins. The typical substrate for this enzyme is propionyl-CoA which is then converted to methylmalonyl-CoA; a reaction which is summarized as

10 propionyl-CoA+CO₂→methylmalonyl-CoA (an ATP dependent reaction).

Other acyl-CoA substrates may also be converted to the corresponding malonyl-CoA products.

In addition to providing modified host cells that are efficient in producing polyketides, the polyketide synthases, their activation enzymes, and enzymes which 15 provide starter and/or extender units can be used in *in vitro* systems to produce the desired polyketides. For example, the enzymes malonyl-CoA decarboxylase and/or malonyl-CoA synthetase such as those encoded by the *matABC* operon and/or propionyl-CoA carboxylase such as that encoded by the *pccB* and *accA2* genes can be used in *in vitro* cultures to convert precursors to suitable extender and starter units for 20 a desired PKS to effect synthesis of a polyketide in a cell-free or in *in vitro* cell culture system. Purified MatB is particularly advantageously used for the preparative cell free production of polyketides, since CoA thioesters are the most expensive components in such cell-free synthesis systems. Alternatively, as set forth above, 25 these genes are used (in any suitable combination) in a general strategy for production by cells in culture of these substrates. MatB and MatC can be used to effect production of any alpha-carboxylated CoA thioester where the corresponding free acid can be recognized as a substrate by MatB. The MatA protein may also be used to supplement *in vitro* or *in vivo* levels of starter units such as acetyl-CoA and propionyl-CoA. The genes encoding propionyl-CoA carboxylase can also be used to provide the 30 enzyme to synthesize suitable extender units *in vivo*.

Thus, the invention includes a method to enhance the production of a polyketide, including a complete polyketide in a microbial host, which method comprises providing said host with an expression system for an enzyme which

enhances the production of starter and/or extender units used in constructing the polyketide. A "complete" polyketide is a polyketide which forms the basis for an antibiotic, such as the polyketides which are precursors to erythromycin, megalomycin, and the like. The enzymes include those encoded by the *matABC* operon and their homologs in other organisms as well as the *pccB* and *accA2* genes encoding propionyl carboxylase and their homologs in other organisms. In another aspect, the invention is directed to a method of enhancing production of polyketides in cell-free systems by providing one or more of these enzymes to the cell-free system.

5 The invention is also directed to cells modified to produce the enzymes and to methods of producing polyketides using these cells, as well as to methods of 10 producing polyketides using cell-free systems.

15 The invention also includes a method to enhance polyketide production in a microbial system by supplementing the medium with a substrate for an endogenous enzyme which converts this substrate to a starter or extender unit.

15 The invention also includes a method to produce polyketides in microbial hosts containing modifications to assist polyketide production, such as disarming of the endogenous genes which encode proteins for catabolism of required substrates, by supplying these cells with synthetic precursors, such as diketide precursors.

20 The polyketide produced may be one normally produced by the PKS and may exist in nature; in this case the presence of the gene encoding the starter/extender production-enhancing enzyme *in vivo* or of the enzyme itself in cell free systems may simply enhance the level of production. In addition, the PKS may be a modified PKS 25 designed to produce a novel polyketide, whose production may be enhanced in similar fashion. Because of the ability of the enzymes described herein to accept a wide range of substrates, extender units and starter units can be provided based on a wide range of readily available reagents. As stated above, diketide starting materials may also be supplied.

25 The invention thus also includes the various other modifications of microbial hosts described above to permit or enhance their production of polyketides and to 30 methods of producing polyketides using such hosts.

The ability to modify hosts such as *E. coli* and other prokaryotes such as *Bacillus* to permit production of polyketides in such hosts has numerous advantages, many of which reside in the inherent nature of *E. coli*. One important advantage

resides in the ease with which *E. coli* can be transformed as compared to other microorganisms which natively produce polyketides. One important application of this transformation ease is in assessing the results of gene shuffling of polyketide synthases. Thus, an additional aspect of the invention is directed to a method to 5 assess the results of polyketide synthase gene shuffling which method comprises transfecting a culture of the *E. coli* modified according to the invention with a mixture of shuffled polyketide synthases and culturing individual colonies. Those colonies which produce polyketides contain successfully shuffled genes.

In addition to modifying microbial hosts, especially procaryotic hosts, to 10 produce polyketides, these hosts may further be modified to produce the enzymes which "tailor" the polyketides and effect their conversion to antibiotics. Such tailoring reactions include glycosylation, oxidation, hydroxylation and the like.

To effect production of the polyketides in a microbial host, it is preferable to permit substantial growth of the culture prior to inducing the enzymes which effect 15 the synthesis of the polyketides. Thus, in hosts which do not natively produce polyketides, the required expression systems for the PKS genes are placed under control of an inducible promoter, such as the T7 promoter which is induced by IPTG. There is a plethora of suitable promoters which are inducible in a variety of such microbial hosts. Other advantageous features of the modified host, such as the ability 20 to synthesize starters or extenders, may also be under inducible control. Finally, precursors to the starting materials for polyketide synthase may be withheld until synthesis is desired. Thus, for example, if the starting materials are derived from propionate, propionate can be supplied at any desired point during the culturing of the cells. If a diketide or triketide starting material is used, this too can be withheld until 25 the appropriate time. Prior to addition of the precursor, a minimal medium may be used and alternate carbon sources employed to supply energy and materials for growth.

As described above, the invention provides methods for both *in vitro* and 30 *in vivo* synthesis of any arbitrarily chosen polyketide where the *in vivo* synthesis may be conducted in any microbial, especially procaryotic host. The procaryotic host is typically of the genus *Bacillus*, *Pseudomonas*, *Flavobacterium*, or more typically *Escherichia*, in particular *E. coli*. Whether *in vitro* or *in vivo* synthesis is employed, it may be necessary to supply one or more of a suitable polyketide synthase (which may

be native or modified), one or more enzymes to produce starter and/or extender units, typically including converting the free acid to the CoA derivative, and, if the foregoing enzymes are produced in a host, tailoring enzymes to activate them. In addition, for *in vivo* synthesis, it may be necessary to disarm catabolic enzymes which would otherwise destroy the appropriate starting materials.

With respect to production of starting materials, the genes of the *matABC* operon and the genes encoding propionyl carboxylase can be employed to produce their encoded proteins for use in cell free polyketide synthesis and also to modify recombinant hosts for production of polyketides in cell culture. These genes and their corresponding encoded products are useful to provide optimum levels of substrates for polyketide synthase in any host in which such synthesis is to be effected. The host may be one which natively produces a polyketide and its corresponding antibiotic or may be a recombinantly modified host which either does not natively produce any polyketide or which has been modified to produce a polyketide which it normally does not make. Thus, microorganism hosts which are useable for the synthesis of polyketides include various strains of *Streptomyces*, in particular *S. coelicolor* and *S. lividans*, various strains of *Myxococcus*, industrially favorable hosts such as *E. coli*, *Bacillus*, *Pseudomonas* or *Flavobacterium*, and other microorganisms such as yeast. These genes and their corresponding proteins are useful in adjusting substrate levels for polyketide synthesis generally.

Substrate Specificity and Polyketide Design

These genes and their products are particularly useful because of the ability of the enzymes to utilize a range of starting materials. Thus, in general, propionyl carboxylase converts a thioester of the formula $R_2\text{-CH-CO-SCoA}$, where each R is H or an optionally substituted alkyl or other optionally substituted hydrocarbyl group to the corresponding malonic acid thioester of the formula $R_2\text{C}(\text{COOH})\text{COSCoA}$. Other thioesters besides the natural co-enzyme A thioester may also be used such as the N-acyl cysteamine thioesters. Similarly, the product of the *matB* gene can convert malonic acid derivatives of the formula $R_2\text{C}(\text{COOH})_2$ to the corresponding acyl thioester, where each R is independently H or optionally substituted hydrocarbyl. A preferred starting material is that wherein R is alkyl (1-4C), preferably $\text{RCH}(\text{COOH})_2$. For *in vivo* systems, it may be advantageous to include the *matC* gene to ensure

membrane transport of the starting malonic acid related material. The *matA* gene encodes a protein which converts malonyl-CoA substrates of the formula $R_2C(COOH)COSCoA$ to the corresponding acyl-CoA of the formula $R_2CHCOSCoA$, where R is defined as above, for use as a starter unit.

5 Typically, the hydrocarbyl groups referred to above are alkyl groups of 1-8C, preferably 1-6C, and more preferably 1-4C. The alkyl groups may be straight chain or branch chain, but are preferably straight chain. The hydrocarbyl groups may also include unsaturation and may further contain substituents such as halo, hydroxyl, methoxyl or amino or methyl or dimethyl amino. Thus, the hydrocarbyl groups may
10 be of the formula $CH_3CHCHCH_2$; CH_2CHCH_2 ; $CH_3OCH_2CH_2CH_2$; CH_3CCCH_2 ; $CH_3CH_2CH_2CH_2CH_2$; and the like.

15 The substituted alkyl groups are also 1-8C in the backbone chain, preferably 1-6C and more preferably 1-4C. The alkenyl and alkynyl hydrocarbyl groups contain 2-8C, preferably 2-6C, and more preferably 2-4C and may also be branched or straight chain, preferably straight chain.

20 Further variability can be obtained by supplying as a starting material a suitable diketide. The diketide generally of the formulas such as those set forth in U.S. Serial No. 09/311,756 filed 14 May 1999 and incorporated herein by reference. A variety of substituents can then be introduced. Thus, the diketide will be of the general formula $R'CH_2CHOHCR_2COSNAC$ wherein R is defined as above, and R' can be alkyl, 1-8C, aryl, aryl alkyl, and the like. SNAC represents a thioester of N-acetyl cysteamine, but alternative thioesters could also be used.

25 For either *in vivo* or *in vitro* production of the polyketides, acyl transferase domains with desired specificities can be incorporated into the relevant PKS. Methods for assuring appropriate specificity of the AT domains is described in detail in U.S. Patent Application 09/346,860 filed 2 July 1999, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference, to describe how such domains of desired specificity can be created and employed. Also relevant to the use of these enzymes *in vitro* or the genes *in vivo* are methods to mediate polyketide synthase module effectiveness by assuring appropriate transfer of the growing polyketide chain from one module to the next. Such methods are described in detail in U.S. Serial No. 09/500,747 filed 9 February 2000, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference for this description.

The nucleotide sequences encoding a multiplicity of PKS permits their use in recombinant procedures for producing a desired PKS and for production of the proteins useful in postmacrolide conversions, as well as modified forms thereof. For example, the nucleotide sequences for genes related to the production of erythromycin 5 is disclosed in U.S. 6,004,787 and U.S. 5,998,194; for avermectin in U.S. 5,252,474; for FK506 in U.S. 5,622,866; for rifamycin in WO98/7868; for spiramycin in U.S. 5,098,837. These are merely examples. Portions of, or all of, the desired coding 10 sequences can be synthesized using standard solid phase synthesis methods such as those described by Jaye *et al.*, *J Biol Chem* (1984) 259:6331 and which are available commercially from, for example, Applied Biosystems, Inc.

A portion of the PKS which encodes a particular activity can be isolated and manipulated, for example, by using it to replace the corresponding region in a different modular PKS. In addition, individual modules of the PKS may be ligated 15 into suitable expression systems and used to produce the portion of the protein encoded by the open reading frame and the protein may then be isolated and purified, or which may be employed *in situ* to effect polyketide synthesis. Depending on the host for the recombinant production of the module or an entire open reading frame, or combination of open reading frames, suitable control sequences such as promoters, 20 termination sequences, enhancers, and the like are ligated to the nucleotide sequence encoding the desired protein. Suitable control sequences for a variety of hosts are well known in the art.

The availability of these nucleotide sequences expands the possibility for the production of novel polyketides and their corresponding antibiotics using host cells modified to contain suitable expression systems for the appropriate enzymes. By 25 manipulating the various activity-encoding regions of a donor PKS by replacing them into a scaffold of a different PKS or by forming hybrids instead of or in addition to such replacements or other mutagenizing alterations, a wide variety of polyketides and corresponding antibiotics may be obtained. These techniques are described, for example, in U.S. Serial No. 09/073,538 filed 6 May 1998 and incorporated herein by 30 reference.

A polyketide synthase may be obtained that produces a novel polyketide by, for example, using the scaffolding encoded by all or the portion employed of a natural synthase gene. The synthase will contain at least one module that is functional,

preferably two or three modules, and more preferably four or more modules and contains mutations, deletions, or replacements of one or more of the activities of these functional modules so that the nature of the resulting polyketide is altered. This description applies both at the protein and genetic levels. Particularly preferred embodiments include those wherein a KS, AT, KR, DH or ER has been deleted or replaced by a version of the activity from a different PKS or from another location within the same PKS. Also preferred are derivatives where at least one noncondensation cycle enzymatic activity (KR, DH or ER) has been deleted or wherein any of these activities has been mutated so as to change the ultimate 5 polyketide synthesized.

10

Thus, in order to obtain nucleotide sequences encoding a variety of derivatives of the naturally occurring PKS, and a variety of polyketides, a desired number of constructs can be obtained by "mixing and matching" enzymatic activity-encoding portions, and mutations can be introduced into the native host PKS gene cluster or 15 portions thereof.

Mutations can be made to the native sequences using conventional techniques. The substrates for mutation can be an entire cluster of genes or only one or two of them; the substrate for mutation may also be portions of one or more of these genes. Techniques for mutation include preparing synthetic oligonucleotides including the 20 mutations and inserting the mutated sequence into the gene encoding a PKS subunit using restriction endonuclease digestion (See, e.g., Kunkel, T.A. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* (1985) 82:448; Geisselsoder *et al. BioTechniques* (1987) 5:786.) or by a variety of other art-known methods.

Random mutagenesis of selected portions of the nucleotide sequences 25 encoding enzymatic activities can also be accomplished by several different techniques known in the art, e.g., by inserting an oligonucleotide linker randomly into a plasmid, by irradiation with X-rays or ultraviolet light, by incorporating incorrect nucleotides during *in vitro* DNA synthesis, by error-prone PCR mutagenesis, by preparing synthetic mutants or by damaging plasmid DNA *in vitro* with chemicals.

In addition to providing mutated forms of regions encoding enzymatic 30 activity, regions encoding corresponding activities from different PKS synthases or from different locations in the same PKS synthase can be recovered, for example, using PCR techniques with appropriate primers. By "corresponding" activity

encoding regions is meant those regions encoding the same general type of activity -- e.g., a ketoreductase activity in one location of a gene cluster would "correspond" to a ketoreductase-encoding activity in another location in the gene cluster or in a different gene cluster; similarly, a complete reductase cycle could be considered corresponding -- e.g., KR/DH/ER would correspond to KR alone.

If replacement of a particular target region in a host polyketide synthase is to be made, this replacement can be conducted *in vitro* using suitable restriction enzymes or can be effected *in vivo* using recombinant techniques involving homologous sequences framing the replacement gene in a donor plasmid and a receptor region in a recipient plasmid. Such systems, advantageously involving plasmids of differing temperature sensitivities are described, for example, in PCT application WO 96/40968.

Finally, polyketide synthase genes, like DNA sequences in general, in addition to the methods for systematic alteration and random mutagenesis outlined above, can be modified by the technique of "gene shuffling" as described in U.S. patent 5,834,458, assigned to Maxygen, and U.S. patents 5,830,721, 5,811,238 and 5,605,793, assigned to Affymax. In this technique, DNA sequences encoding bPKS are cut with restriction enzymes, amplified, and then re-ligated. This results in a mixture of rearranged genes which can be assessed for their ability to produce polyketides. The ability to produce polyketides in easily transformed hosts, such as *E. coli*, makes this a practical approach.

There are five degrees of freedom for constructing a polyketide synthase in terms of the polyketide that will be produced. First, the polyketide chain length will be determined by the number of modules in the PKS. Second, the nature of the carbon skeleton of the PKS will be determined by the specificities of the acyl transferases which determine the nature of the extender units at each position -- e.g., malonyl, methyl malonyl, or ethyl malonyl, etc. Third, the loading domain specificity will also have an effect on the resulting carbon skeleton of the polyketide. Thus, the loading domain may use a different starter unit, such as acetyl, propionyl, butyryl and the like. Fourth, the oxidation state at various positions of the polyketide will be determined by the dehydratase and reductase portions of the modules. This will determine the presence and location of ketone, alcohol, double bonds or single bonds in the polyketide. Finally, the stereochemistry of the resulting polyketide is a function

of three aspects of the synthase. The first aspect is related to the AT/KS specificity associated with substituted malonyls as extender units, which affects stereochemistry only when the reductive cycle is missing or when it contains only a ketoreductase since the dehydratase would abolish chirality. Second, the specificity of the 5 ketoreductase will determine the chirality of any β -OH. Finally, the enoyl reductase specificity for substituted malonyls as extender units will influence the result when there is a complete KR/DH/ER available.

One useful approach is to modify the KS activity in module 1 which results in the ability to incorporate alternative starter units as well as module 1 extended units. 10 This approach was illustrated in PCT application US/96/11317, incorporated herein by reference, wherein the KS-I activity was inactivated through mutation. Polyketide synthesis is then initiated by feeding chemically synthesized analogs of module 1 diketide products. The methods of the invention can then be used to provide enhanced amount of extender units.

15 Modular PKSs have relaxed specificity for their starter units (Kao *et al.* *Science* (1994), *supra*). Modular PKSs also exhibit considerable variety with regard to the choice of extender units in each condensation cycle. The degree of β -ketoreduction following a condensation reaction has also been shown to be altered by genetic manipulation (Donadio *et al.* *Science* (1991), *supra*; Donadio, S. *et al.* 20 *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* (1993) 90:7119-7123). Likewise, the size of the polyketide product can be varied by designing mutants with the appropriate number of modules (Kao, C. M. *et al.* *J Am Chem Soc* (1994) 116:11612-11613). Lastly, these enzymes are particularly well-known for generating an impressive range of asymmetric centers 25 in their products in a highly controlled manner. The polyketides and antibiotics produced by the methods of the present invention are typically single stereoisomeric forms. Although the compounds of the invention can occur as mixtures of stereoisomers, it is more practical to generate individual stereoisomers using the PKS systems.

30 The polyketide products of the PKS may be further modified, typically by hydroxylation, oxidation and/or glycosylation, in order to exhibit antibiotic activity.

Methods for glycosylating the polyketides are generally known in the art; the glycosylation may be effected intracellularly by providing the appropriate

glycosylation enzymes or may be effected *in vitro* using chemical synthetic means as described in U.S. Serial No. 09/073,538 incorporated herein by reference.

The antibiotic modular polyketides may contain any of a number of different sugars, although D-desosamine, or a close analog thereof, is most common. For 5 example, erythromycin, picromycin, narbomycin and methymycin contain desosamine. Erythromycin also contains L-cladinose (3-O-methyl mycarose). Tylosin contains mycaminose (4-hydroxy desosamine), mycarose and 6-deoxy-D-allose. 2-acetyl-1-bromodesosamine has been used as a donor to glycosylate polyketides by Masamune *et al.* *J Am Chem Soc* (1975) 97:3512, 3513. Other, 10 apparently more stable, donors include glycosyl fluorides, thioglycosides, and trichloroacetimidates; Woodward, R.B. *et al.* *J Am Chem Soc* (1981) 103:3215; Martin, S.F. *et al.* *Am Chem Soc* (1997) 119:3193; Toshima, K. *et al.* *J Am Chem Soc* (1995) 117:3717; Matsumoto, T. *et al.* *Tetrahedron Lett* (1988) 29:3575. Glycosylation can also be effected using the macrolides as starting materials and 15 using mutants of *S. erythraea* that are unable to synthesize the macrolides to make the conversion.

In general, the approaches to effecting glycosylation mirror those described above with respect to hydroxylation. The purified enzymes, isolated from native sources or recombinantly produced may be used *in vitro*. Alternatively, glycosylation 20 may be effected intracellularly using endogenous or recombinantly produced intracellular glycosylases. In addition, synthetic chemical methods may be employed.

If the hosts ordinarily produce polyketides, it may be desirable to modify them so as to prevent the production of endogenous polyketides by these hosts. Such hosts have been described, for example, in U.S. Patent No. 5,672,491, incorporated herein 25 by reference, which describes *S. coelicolor* CH999 used in the examples below. In such hosts, it may not be necessary to provide enzymatic activity for posttranslational modification of the enzymes that make up the recombinantly produced polyketide synthase; these hosts generally contain suitable enzymes, designated holo-ACP synthases, for providing a pantetheinyl residue needed for functionality of the 30 synthase. However, in hosts such as yeasts, plants, or mammalian cells which ordinarily do not produce polyketides, it may be necessary to provide, also typically by recombinant means, suitable holo-ACP synthases to convert the recombinantly

produced PKS to functionality. Provision of such enzymes is described, for example, in PCT application WO 98/27203, incorporated herein by reference.

Again, depending on the host, and on the nature of the product desired, it may be necessary to provide "tailoring enzymes" or genes encoding them, wherein these 5 tailoring enzymes modify the macrolides produced by oxidation, hydroxylation, glycosylation, and the like.

The encoding nucleotide sequences are operably linked to promoters, 10 enhancers, and/or termination sequences which operate to effect expression of the encoding nucleotide sequence in host cells compatible with these sequences; host cells modified to contain these sequences either as extrachromosomal elements or vectors or integrated into the chromosome, and methods to produce PKS and post-PKS enzymes as well as polyketides and antibiotics using these modified host cells.

The vectors used to perform the various operations to replace the enzymatic 15 activity in the host PKS genes or to support mutations in these regions of the host PKS genes may be chosen to contain control sequences operably linked to the resulting coding sequences in a manner that expression of the coding sequences may be effected in an appropriate host. However, simple cloning vectors may be used as well.

Particularly useful control sequences are those which themselves, or using 20 suitable regulatory systems, activate expression during transition from growth to stationary phase in the vegetative mycelium. The system contained in the illustrative plasmid pRM5, i.e., the *actI/actIII* promoter pair and the *actII*-ORF4, an activator gene, is particularly preferred. Particularly preferred hosts are those which lack their own means for producing polyketides so that a cleaner result is obtained. Illustrative 25 host cells of this type include the modified *S. coelicolor* CH999 culture described in PCT application WO 96/40968 and similar strains of *S. lividans*.

Methods for introducing the recombinant vectors of the present invention into 30 suitable hosts are known to those of skill in the art and typically include the use of CaCl₂ or other agents, such as divalent cations, lipofection, DMSO, protoplast transformation and electroporation.

As disclosed in Serial No. 08/989,332 filed 11 December 1997, incorporated herein by reference, a wide variety of hosts can be used, even though some hosts natively do not contain the appropriate post-translational mechanisms to activate the

acyl carrier proteins of the synthases. These hosts can be modified with the appropriate recombinant enzymes to effect these modifications.

Starting Material Enhancement and Variation

Thus, proteins (and their encoding sequences) wherein the proteins catalyze the production of starter and/or extender units can be used to enhance the production of polyketides by providing a considerable variety of these starter and extender units at higher levels than would ordinarily be produced. Because the proteins catalyze reactions using a variety of substrates, they are versatile tools in enhancing the availability of starter and extender units for a wide variety of PKS, whether modified or unmodified. As stated above, particularly useful are the products of the *matABC* operon (or analogous operons in other species) and the propionic carboxylase encoded by the *pccB* and *accA2* genes (or their analogs in other species). These enzymes and their encoding sequences are useful in view of Applicants' discovery that the *matABC* operon and the propionic carboxylase-encoding genes provide enzymes which not only carry out the required reactions on a variety of substances, but also do so with the production of products with the stereochemistry required for use in polyketide synthesis.

The ability of the genes described herein to provide appropriate starter and extender units was established as described below.

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Example 1

Production of Malonyl CoA and 2S-Methylmalonyl CoA Using the CoA Synthetase

E. coli strain L8 has a temperature-sensitive mutation in the acetyl-CoA carboxylase gene such that malonyl-CoA cannot be produced from acetyl-CoA at 37°C. However, the gene product is able to effect this conversion at 30°C. See Harder, M.E., *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* (1972) 69:3105-3109. Since acetyl-CoA carboxylase conversion of acetyl-CoA into malonyl-CoA is the only known route for malonyl-CoA production in *E. coli*, and since malonyl-CoA is essential for fatty acid biosynthesis, this mutant strain of *E. coli* can grow at 30°C, but not at 37°C. A transformant of L8 carrying the *matABC* operon is produced by transforming with the plasmid pMATOP2 which contains the *matA*, *matB* and *matC* genes under control of their native promoter and is described in An, J.H., *et al.*, *Eur. J. Biochem.* (1998)

257:395-402. This transformant is still unable to grow at 37°C in the absence of malonic acid; however, addition of 1-5 mM malonic acid to the medium permits it to grow at this temperature. (In the absence of the plasmid, malonic acid is unable to support growth at 37°C.) The concentration of the extracellular malonic acid is
5 important, however, as increasing the concentration to 40 mM results in an absence of growth, possibly due to a metabolic imbalance caused by overproduction of malonyl CoA in comparison to the amount of coenzyme A available. Lethality was also induced in XL1-Blue (a wild-type strain of *E. coli*) in the presence of the plasmid carrying the *matABC* operon and high concentrations of methylmalonic acid.

10 Nevertheless, the results set forth above demonstrate that the protein encoded by *matB* produces malonyl-CoA *in vivo* under physiological conditions as long as free malonic acid is available; and transported into the cells by the protein encoded by *matC*. Thus, the *matBC* genes can be used to supplement malonyl-CoA availability in an *E. coli* cell in which complex polyketides are to be produced by feeding malonic
15 acid.

In addition to converting malonic acid into malonyl-CoA, MatB has also been shown to convert methylmalonic acid into methylmalonyl-CoA. However the stereochemistry of the resulting product has not been reported. This is important, because modular polyketide synthases are known to only accept one isomer of
20 methylmalonyl-CoA, namely 2S-methylmalonyl-CoA (Marsden, A.F., *et al.*, *Science* (1994) 263:378-380). To investigate whether MatB can make the correct isomer of methylmalonyl-CoA, construct encoding a glutathione-S-transferase fusion (GST-MatB) was used to produce this protein. See An, J.H., *et al.*, *Biochem. J.* (1999) 344:159-166. The GST-MatB protein was purified according to standard protocols as
25 described and mixed with (module 6+TE) of the erythromycin polyketide synthase, also expressed in *E. coli* as described by Gokhale, R.S., *et al.*, *Science* (1999) 284:482-485.

In earlier studies, Applicants have established the activity of (module 6+TE) by demonstrating its ability to catalyze the following reaction *in vitro*.

30 N-acetylcysteamine thioester of (2S, 3R)-2-methyl-3-hydroxy-pentanoic acid + 2 (RS)-methylmalonyl-CoA + NADPH → (2R,3S,4S,5R)- 2,4-dimethyl-3,5-dihydroxy-n-heptanoic acid δ-lactone +NADP⁺.

The methylmalonic thioester product obtained using methylmalonic acid as the substrate for GST-MatB provides the correct stereochemistry to serve as the source of the extender unit in this reaction. More specifically, to generate the substrate for the above polyketide synthesis *in situ*, the following reaction mixture (containing 6+TE and GST-MatB) was prepared in a reaction buffer of 100 mM Na Phosphate (pH7) buffer, 1 mM EDTA, 2.5 mM DTT and 20% glycerol:

15 After 4 hrs, the reaction was quenched and extracted with ethyl acetate (extracted twice with three times the reaction volume). The samples were dried *in vacuo* and subjected to thin layer chromatography analysis.

A positive control was performed under identical conditions to those described earlier - *i.e.*, conditions wherein (RS)-methylmalonyl-CoA was substituted for the combination of methylmalonic acid, MgCl₂, ATP, CoA SH, and GST-MatB. A negative control included all of the components listed above except for the GST-MatB fusion protein. The results demonstrated that the two-enzyme system described above is able to produce the expected product in quantities comparable to the positive control reaction. This confirms that MatB synthesizes the correct isomer of methylmalonyl-CoA.

30 Thus, MatB/MatC is useful to synthesize both malonyl-CoA and 2S-methylmalonyl-CoA *in vivo* for polyketide biosynthesis. This is the first instance of engineering *E. coli* with the ability to produce 2S-methylmalonyl-CoA *in vivo* under physiological conditions. Moreover, co-expression of *matA* *in vivo* should allow conversion of methylmalonyl-CoA into propionyl-CoA, thereby supplementing available sources of this starter unit.

Example 2Ability of Propionyl CoA Carboxylase to Generate 2S-Methylmalonyl CoA

To utilize the propionyl carboxylase gene from *S. coelicolor* described above, an *E. coli* expression host (BL-21 (DE3)) was prepared using the method developed 5 by Hamilton, C.M., *et al.*, *J. Bacteriol.* (1989) 171:4617-4622. The new strain (BAP1) contains a phosphopantethiene-transferase gene (the *sfp* gene) from *Bacillus subtilis* integrated into the *prp* operon of *E. coli*. The T7 promoter drives *sfp* expression. In the recombination procedure, the *prpE* gene was also placed under control of the T7 promoter, but the rest of the operon was removed. This genetic 10 alteration would ideally provide three features: 1) the expression of the *sfp* protein needed for post-translational modification of the DEBS and potentially other polyketide synthases (PKSs); 2) the expression of the *prpE* protein, a putative propionyl-CoA synthetase theoretically capable of ligating CoASH to propionate; and 15 3) a cellular environment that is no longer able to metabolize propionyl-CoA as a carbon/energy source.

First, it was verified that the BAP1 strain, by virtue of its production of the product of the *sfp* gene was able to effect phosphopantetheinylation of a PKS produced in these cells. BAP1 was transfected with a plasmid comprising an expression system for module 6+TE and the activity of the module produced was 20 compared to the activity of the module produced recombinantly in BL-21 (DE3) cells where the *sfp* gene was plasmid borne. These levels were comparable. In contrast, when expressed alone in BL-21 (DE3), module 6+TE showed no activity. Additionally, BAP1 was confirmed for its inability to grow on propionate as a sole 25 carbon source (a property exhibited by *E. coli* strains such as BL21 (DE3)). BAP1 is a preferred host for the heterologous expression of polyketide synthases in conjunction with enzymes such as MatBC and propionyl-CoA carboxylase.

The propionyl-CoA carboxylase enzyme was expressed in *E. coli* under the T7 promoter. The product enzyme was able to supply substrate for module 6+TE *in vitro*. This was demonstrated using the coupling of the methylmalonyl-CoA thioester 30 product of the propionyl CoA carboxylase enzyme to the N-acetyl cysteamine thioester of (2S,2R)2-methyl-3-hydroxypentanoic acid. The *pccB* and *accA2* genes described above which encode the components of the propionyl-CoA carboxylase, were expressed and the products individually purified according to standard

procedures. Initially, the pccB and accA2 subunits were allowed to complex on ice in 150 mM phosphate (pH7) and 300 µg BSA. After 1 hour, the following substrates were added to a volume of 100 µl and incubated for an additional 30 minutes at 30°C:

5 1 mM propionyl-CoA
 50 mM sodium bicarbonate
 3 mM ATP
 5 mM MgCl₂

Module 6+TE was then added with the following final set of reagents to give
10 200 µl total and allowed to react for an additional hour at 30°C:

10 % glycerol
1.25 mM DTT
0.5 mM EDTA
4 mM NADPH
15 2 mM N-acetylcysteamine thioester of (2S, 3R)-2-methyl-3-hydroxypentanoic acid (prepared in radioactive form).

The reaction was quenched and extracted as described above, and showed formation of expected product. A positive control included racemic malonyl-CoA.
20 When either ATP or sodium bicarbonate was removed from the reaction, no product was formed. The propionyl-CoA carboxylase thus produces a substrate suitable for polyketide synthase activity. This is particularly useful for polyketide production, especially in conjunction with the new expression host mentioned above, BAP1.

The DEBS protein DEBS1+TE is produced by pRSG32. DEBS1 shows the weakest expression of the three DEBS proteins and, until recently, the enzyme showed no *in vitro* activity. However, by growing *E. coli* containing pRSG32 in M9 minimal medium, and inducing protein expression at 22°C, DEBS1+TE activity is now reproducibly observed.

30 Plasmids pRSG32 (DEBS1+TE) and p132 (a plasmid containing the α and β components of propionyl-CoA carboxylase) were cotransfected into BAP1. Cultures of 10 ml M9 minimal media were grown to mid-log phase levels and concentrated to 1 ml for induction with IPTG and the addition of 0.267 mM ¹⁴C-propionate. The samples were then incubated at 22°C for 12-15 hours. The culture supernatant was

then extracted with ethyl acetate for analytical TLC. A product ran with the expected positive control and this same product was undetectable when using either wild type BL-21 (DE3) or removing p132. thus, the carboxylase forms the correct stereoisomer.

5 In addition, 100 ml cultures of M9 minimal media containing BAP1 transformed with pRSG32, p132, and pCY214 (a biotin ligase included to aid biotin's attachment to the α subunit of the propionyl-CoA carboxylase) were grown to mid-log phase for induction with IPTG and the addition of 100 mg/L ^{13}C -propionate. Upon extraction of the culture supernatant and concentration of the sample, ^{13}C -NMR confirmed the location of the expected enriched product peaks. A subsequent negative control using BL-21 (DE3) failed to yield the same spectrum. In addition to demonstrating the ability of *E. coli* to make complex polyketides *in vivo*, these results also suggest that the prpE protein programmed to express in BAP1 is active.

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Example 3

Enhanced Production of 6-dEB in *S. coelicolor*

The presence of the *matB* and *matC* genes was also able to enhance the recombinant production of 6-dEB in *S. coelicolor* which had been recombinantly modified to produce this polyketide by insertion of the DEBS gene complex on the vector pCK7. The *matB* and *matC* genes were expressed in a recombinant strain of *Streptomyces coelicolor* that produces 50 mg/L 6-deoxyerythronolide B by virtue of plasmid borne DEBS genes. The *matB* and *matC* genes were inserted immediately downstream of DEBS genes on pCK7. In more detail, the source of the *matBC* genes is pFL482, a derivative of PCR-Blunt (Invitrogen) containing a 5 kb *Bg*II/*Hind*III fragment from pMATOP2 which carries the *matBC* genes. The *Nsi*I fragment of pFL482 containing the *matBC* genes was cloned into the unique *Nsi*I site of pCK7 in the same direction as the DEBS genes to yield pFL494. Upon transformation of plasmid pFL494 into *S. coelicolor* CH999, macrolide titer increases of 100-300% were obtained in the presence of exogenous methylmalonate (0.1-1 g/L).

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In more detail, cultures of *S. coelicolor* CH999 with or without plasmid pCK7 or pFL494 were grown in flasks using R6 medium (sucrose, 103 g/L; K_2SO_4 , 0.25 g/L; $\text{MgCl}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 10.12 g/L; sodium propionate, 0.96 g/L; casamino acids

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(Difco), 0.1 g/L; trace elements solution, 2 mL/L; yeast extract (Fisher), 5 g/L; pH 7) supplemented with bis-tris propane buffer (28.2 g/L). Trace elements solution contained $ZnCl_2$, 40 mg/L; $FeCl_3 \cdot 6H_2O$, 200 mg/L; $CuCl_2 \cdot 2H_2O$, 10 mg/L; $MnCl_2 \cdot 4H_2O$, 10 mg/L; $Na_2B_4O_7 \cdot 1OH_2O$, 10 mg/L; $(NH_4)_6Mo_7O_{24} \cdot 4H_2O$. All media were supplemented with 50 mg/L thiostrepton (Calbiochem) to select for plasmid-containing cells, and with 5 mL/L Antifoam B (JT Baker) for control of foam. Thiostrepton was dissolved in DMSO prior to addition to cultures, giving a final DMSO concentration of approximately 1 mL/L of medium.

5 Seed cultures for the fermentation were prepared by inoculation of 50 mL medium, followed by growth for two days at 240 rpm and 30°C in 250 mL baffled flasks (Bellco). These seed cultures were then used to inoculate 50 mL medium in the presence or absence of 1 g/L methylmalonate in 250-mL baffled flasks at 5% of final volume. All flask cultures were run in duplicate and sampled daily. The entire experiment was repeated once to ensure batch-to-batch reproducibility of the results.

10 Quantitation of 6-dEB and 8,8a-deoxyoleandolide was carried out using a Hewlett-Packard 1090 HPLC equipped with an Alltec 500 evaporative light scattering detector. HPLC samples were first centrifuged 5 min at 12,000xg to remove insolubles. The supernatant (20 μ L) was applied onto a 4.6 x 10 mm column (Inertsil, C18 ODS3, 5 μ m), washed with water (1 ml/min for 2 min), and finally eluted onto 15 the main column (4.6 x 50 mm, same stationary phase and flow rate) with a 6-min gradient starting with 100% water and ending with 100% acetonitrile. 20 100% acetonitrile was then maintained for one min. Under these conditions, 6-dEB eluted at 6.2 minutes and 8.8a-deoxyoleandolide at 5.8 min. Standards were prepared from 6-dEB purified from fermentation broth. Quantitation error was estimated to 25 be $\pm 10\%$.

As described above, *S. coelicolor* CH999 either containing pCK7 or containing pFL494 were compared for their productivity of 6-dEB and 8,8a-deoxyoleandolide.

30 The results show the following:

1. Cell density was substantially the same for both strains.
2. The production of both 6-dEB and 8,8a-deoxyoleandolide is dramatically enhanced in CH999/pFL494 as compared to CH999/pCK7, whether measured in terms of mg/liters/hour or in mg/liter as a final titer after six days.

(8,8a-deoxyoleandolide is the same as 6-dEB except that it contains methyl instead of ethyl as position 12, since acetyl CoA rather than propionyl CoA is used as a starter unit.) More specifically, after six days CH999/pFL494 plus methylmalonic acid produced 180 mg/l 6-dEB and about 90 mg/l of 8,8a-deoxyoleandolide. If methylmalonic acid was not added to the medium, 6-dEB was produced at a level of 130 mg/l while 8,8a-deoxyoleandolide was produced at about 40 mg/l. For CH999 modified to contain pCK7, in the presence of methylmalonic acid in the medium, only 60 mg/l 6-dEB were formed along with about 20 mg/l of 8,8a-deoxyoleandolide. Without methylmalonic acid, these cells produced slightly less of each of these macrolides.

10 3. CH999/pFL494 completely consumed methylmalonate supplied at 1 g/L by day 6.

15 4. Consumption of 1 g/L methylmalonate results in a cumulative increase in macrolide of 200 m/L, representing a 35% conversion efficiency of methylmalonate into products.

5. CH999/pFL494 shows improved production of both macrolides even in the absence of exogenous methylmalonate (see 2 above).

20 6. Even CH999/pCK7 showed a 20% improvement in 6-dEB production when exogenous methylmalonate was added (see 2 above).

25 In addition to enhancing the productivity of known polyketides in natural and heterologous hosts, MatB is also used to produce novel polyketides. In contrast to other enzymes that produce the alpha-carboxylated CoA thioester building blocks for polyketide biosynthesis, such as methylmalonyl-CoA mutase (which has a high degree of specificity for succinyl-CoA) and acetyl/propionyl-CoA carboxylase (which prefers acetyl-CoA and/or propionyl-CoA), MatB is active with respect to a wide range of substrates. In addition to malonate and methylmalonate, MatB is able to activate substrates such as ethylmalonate, dimethylmalonate, isopropylmalonate, propylmalonate, allylmalonate, cyclopropylmalonate, and cyclobutylmalonate into their corresponding CoA thioesters.

30 Incorporation of these substrates into polyketide synthases requires a suitable acyltransferase (AT) which may be engineered into the appropriate module of a polyketide synthase, so that it can accept the unnatural substrate. Though none of these dicarboxylic acids yield detectable quantities of novel compounds when fed to

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CH999/pFL494, certain PKS enzymes naturally possess AT domains with orthogonal substrate specificity. For example, the FK506 PKS contains an acyltransferase domain that ordinarily incorporates bulky substrates such as propylmalonyl-CoA in preference to substrates such as malonyl-CoA or methylmalonyl-CoA, and can thus accept MatB-generated unnatural building blocks without any PKS engineering.

10

Using a protein engineering strategy described by Lau, J., *et al.*, *Biochemistry* (1999) 38:1643-1651, the AT domain of module 6 of DEBS in pFL494 was modified to include the specificity determining segment from the niddamycin AT4 domain which incorporates ethylmalonyl-CoA. See: Kakavas, S.J., *et al.*, *J. Bacteriol* (1997) 179:7515-7522. The resulting plasmid pFL508 was transformed into CH999. Upon feeding this strain with ethylmalonate, mass spectroscopy was able to detect a product corresponding to 2-ethyl-6dEB in levels comparable to that of 6dEB. The new compound was undetectable in the absence of ethylmalonate or in a control strain lacking the *matBC* genes.

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Example 4

Production of 6-dEB in *E. coli*

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We have demonstrated the ability of *E. coli* to produce complex, complete, polyketides, when programmed with the ability to express a functional PKS, a pantetheinyltransferase, and one or more pathways for producing starter and extender units. *E. coli* strain BL-21(DE) obtained from Novagen was modified genetically by inserting the phosphopantetheinyl transferase gene (the *sfp* gene) from *Bacillus subtilis* into the chromosome under the control of the phage T7 promoter by deleting the *prpA-D* portion of the *prp* operon, thus also placing the *prpE* locus, which encodes a propionyl CoA synthetase, under control of the T7 promoter. This genetically modified strain was then modified to include expression systems for the three genes encoding the DEBS1, DEBS2, and DEBS3 proteins, also under control of the T7 promoter as well as genes encoding propionyl CoA carboxylase and a gene encoding biotin ligase which is necessary for activation of the propionyl CoA carboxylase enzyme. The resulting *E. coli* contains a complete synthase for 6-dEB, a phosphopantetheinyl transferase necessary for the activation of this PKS, the propionyl CoA carboxylase enzymes that supply methylmalonyl CoA from propionyl CoA, and an inducible means to produce the endogenous propionyl CoA synthase

capable of converting exogenous propionate to propionyl CoA. In addition, the endogenous system for catabolism of propionate was disarmed.

5 Thus, the *E. coli* are provided enzymes for synthesis of both starter and extender units under control of an inducible promoter, the endogenous mechanism for destruction of the propionate precursor of the starter and extender units has been disarmed; and expression systems (also under inducible promoters) have been provided for the necessary PKS proteins along with an expression system for the enzyme for activation of the PKS proteins.

10 In more detail, the genetically modified BL-21(DE3) strain was prepared according to the procedure described in Hamilton, *et al.*, *J. Bacteriol* (1989) 171:4617-4622. A derivative of pMAK705 described in this publication, was prepared. In the derived vector, a T7 promoter coupled to the *sfp* gene was flanked by a 1,000 base pair sequence identical to that upstream of the A locus of the *prp* operon and a 1,000 base pair sequence identical to the sequence downstream of the E locus of 15 this operon. The *sfp* gene was obtained from pUC8-sfp, a plasmid described by Nakano, *et al.*, *Mol. Gen. Genet.* (1992) 232:313-321. The resulting integrated sequence deletes the *prp* loci A-D and inserts the T7 promoter controlling the *sfp* gene in their place and further results in placing the *prpE* locus under the control of the T7 promoter. The T7 promoter is inducible by IPTG.

20 The resulting genetically altered host, designated BAP 1, was than transfected with three plasmids each selectable for a different antibiotic resistance. These plasmids are as follows:

pBP130 is derived from pET21 (carb^R) obtained from Novagen and modified to contain the DEBS2 and DEBS3 genes under control of the T7 promoter.

25 pBP144 is a modified form of pET28 (kan^R) also available from Novagen containing the pcc and DEBS1 genes, also under control of the T7 promoter.

pCY214 (cm^R) contains the *E. coli* bira (biotin ligase) gene under the ara promoter and is described in Chapman-Smith, *et al.*, *Biochem. J.* (1994) 302:881-887. This plasmid was obtained as a gift from Dr. Hugo Gramajo. The PCC protein and *pcc* gene are described 30 in Rodriguez, *et al.*, *Microbiol.* (1999) 145:3109-3119.

For the production of 6-dEB, BAP1 cells transformed with pBP130, pBP144, and pCY214 were grown in M9 minimal media with the appropriate antibiotics. The culture was grown to mid-log phase, followed by induction with IPTG and arabinose and the concomitant addition of 250 mg/L ¹³C-1-propionate. Induced cultures were

grown for 12-24 hrs at 22°C. (Both the minimal medium and lower temperatures were found to be beneficial for DEBS gene expression. This protocol permitted growth-related production of 6-dEB, since glucose provided the carbon and energy source for general metabolism, while propionate was converted into 6-dEB.)

5 After 12-24 h the culture supernatant was extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic phase was dried *in vacuo*, and re-dissolved in CDCl₃ for ¹³C-NMR analysis. The accompanying spectrum showed that 6-dEB was the major ¹³C-labeled product. Other major ¹³C-labeled compound(s) with peaks in the range of 120-140 ppm are not derived from propionate incorporation, as confirmed by a separate experiment in
10 which ¹³C-3-propionate was used in lieu of ¹³C-1-propionate. From the intensities of peaks corresponding to 6-dEB, it is estimated that at least 75% of the exogenous propionate was converted into 6-dEB. This was consistent with the disappearance of the propionate signal from the ¹³C NMR spectrum of the culture medium at the end of
15 the fermentation. Negative control strains, which lacked either pBP130 or pBP144, failed to yield detectable quantities of 6-dEB.

The foregoing experiments were performed at low cell densities (OD₆₀₀ in the range of 0.5-2.5); a major advantage of synthesizing recombinant products in *E. coli* is that this bacterium can be grown to extremely high cell densities (OD₆₀₀ of 100-200) without significant loss in its specific catalytic activity.

20 The use of the *matB* and *C* genes or any of their homologs from other organisms in a non-native expression system is useful as a general strategy for the *in vivo* production of any alpha-carboxylated CoA thioester in any microbial host. The *in vivo* production of such CoA thioesters could be intended to enhance natural polyketide productivity or to produce novel polyketides. The *matA* gene is also
25 useful to supplement *in vivo* levels of substrates such as acetyl-CoA and propionyl-CoA. Purified MatB is also used for the preparative *in vitro* production of polyketides, since CoA thioesters are the most expensive components in such cell-free synthesis systems.

Example 5

Incorporation of Diketides

30 The BAP1 *E. coli* host organism described in Example 4 was transfected with p132 which contains an expression system for the PCCA and B subunits and with

pRSG36 which contains an expression system for module 6+TE of DEBS3. The transfected cultures were grown on minimal selection media for both plasmids and then fed ^{14}C labeled diketide. When induced and provided with propionate, ^{14}C labeled triketide was obtained.

Claims

1. Prokaryotic host cells which are genetically modified for enhanced synthesis of at least one polyketide, wherein said modification comprises incorporation of at least one expression system for producing a protein that catalyzes the production of starter and/or extender units and/or disabling at least one endogenous pathway for catabolism of starter and/or extender units.
5
2. The cells of claim 1 which are of the genus *Escherichia*, *Streptomyces*, *Bacillus*, *Pseudomonas*, or *Flavobacterium*.
3. The cells of claim 2 which are *E. coli*.
- 10 4. The cells of claim 1 which produce a complete polyketide.
5. The cells of claim 3 which produce a complete polyketide.
6. The cells of claim 4 wherein the polyketide is 6-dEB.
7. The cells of claim 1 which do not produce polyketide in the absence of genetic modification, and wherein said genetic modification further comprises incorporation of at least one expression system for a polyketide synthase protein.
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8. The cells of claim 7 wherein said genetic modification comprises incorporation of at least one expression system for a phosphopantetheinyl transferase.
9. The cells of claim 4 wherein said at least one polyketide synthase protein is derived from erythromycin, oleandomycin, megalomycin, picromycin, FK506, FK520, rapamycin, spinosad, avermectin, tylosin or epothilone.
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10. A method to produce a polyketide which method comprises culturing the cells of claim 1 under conditions wherein said polyketide is produced.

11. A method to assess the results of a procedure effecting modification of polyketide synthase genes, resulting in a mixture of said modified genes which method comprises

transfected a culture of *E. coli* of claim 3 with said mixture of modified genes,

culturing individual colonies of said transformed *E. coli*, and assessing each colony for polyketide production

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said *E. coli* have been modified to contain a functional phosphopantetheinyl transferase, a functional propionyl CoA carboxylase and have further been modified to delete the *prpA-D* operon.

13. A method to enhance the production of a polyketide in a microbial host which method comprises providing said host with an expression system for a first enzyme that catalyzes the production of starter and/or extender units used in constructing the polyketide.

15 14. The method of claim 13 wherein said first enzyme is propionyl CoA carboxylase.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said propionyl CoA carboxylase is encoded by the *pccB* and *accA2* genes from *S. coelicolor*.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein said first enzyme is malonyl CoA
20 decarboxylase.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the malonyl CoA decarboxylase is encoded by the *matA* gene from *R. trifoli*.

18. The method of claim 13 wherein said first enzyme is malonyl CoA synthetase.

25 19. The method of claim 18 wherein the malonyl CoA synthetase is
encoded by the *matB* gene of *R. trifoli*.

20. The method of claim 48 which further includes providing the substrate for malonyl CoA synthetase and an expression system for a second enzyme that effects entry of said substrate into the cell.

5 21. The method of claim 20 wherein the second enzyme is encoded by the *matC* gene of *R. trifoli*.

22. The method of claim 20 wherein said substrate is of the formula $R_2C(COOH)_2$ wherein each R is H or is an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl group of 1-8C.

10 23. The method of claim 22 wherein one R is H, methyl or ethyl and the other is H.

24. Recombinant microbial cells that produce at least one polyketide which cells have been modified to contain an expression system for a nucleotide sequence encoding at least one enzyme that enhances the production of a starter and/or extender unit of said polyketide.

15 25. The cells of claim 24 which are *Streptomyces* or *Escherichia*.

26. The cells of claim 25 which are *Streptomyces coelicolor* CH999 or *E. coli*.

27. The cells of claim 26 which are *E. coli*

28. The cells of claim 27 wherein said polyketide is a complete polyketide.

20 29. The cells of claim 28 wherein said polyketide is 6-dEB.

30. A method to produce a polyketide which method comprises culturing the cells of claim 24 under conditions wherein said polyketide is produced.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein precursor for starter and/or extender is added to the medium.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein said at least one precursor is a diketide.

5 33. A reaction mixture for the production of a polyketide which reaction mixture comprises, in addition to enzymes catalyzing the production of said polyketide, at least one enzyme which catalyzes the conversion of a substrate to an extender or starter unit for said polyketide.

10 34. The reaction mixture of claim 33 wherein said first enzyme is propionyl CoA carboxylase.

15 35. The reaction mixture of claim 34 wherein said propionyl CoA carboxylase is encoded by the *pccB* and *accA2* genes from *S. coelicolor*.

36. The reaction mixture of claim 33 wherein said first enzyme is malonyl CoA decarboxylase.

37. The reaction mixture of claim 36 wherein the malonyl CoA decarboxylase is encoded by the *matA* gene from *R. trifoli*.

15 38. The reaction mixture of claim 36 which further includes providing the substrate for malonyl CoA synthetase and a substrate therefor.

39. The reaction mixture of claim 37 wherein said substrate is of the formula $R_2C(COOH)_2$ wherein each R is H or is an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl group of 1-8C.

20 40. A method for producing a polyketide which comprises adding a substrate to the reaction mixture of claim 33.

41. The method of claim 40 wherein the substrate is a diketide.

42. Modified *E. coli* cells that produce a complete polyketide.

43. The cells of claim 42 wherein the polyketide is 6-dEB.